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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education in Appalachia need to examine their role as the primary leaders of educational change in terms of solving the educational problems of the region. The uniqueness of the Appalachian region (which might be characterized as a closed system), coupled with identifiable regional needs, should be conducive to a recognition of appropriate actions which colleges and universities might take to assume their expected roles. The colleges and universities located in the region may utilize various Federal grants and programs to assist them in this effort. With the use of change-manipulation procedures (e.g., bypass or multi-event planning), higher education could join resources with other agencies to accomplish greater educational change related to needs of Appalachia. In addition, there are numerous ways in which higher education and state departments can cooperate in experimentation and the development of new ideas. (AL)

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COOPERATIVE ACTION ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF APPALACHIA

In terms of the role of higher education in the development of expansion of education, there probably would be little debate about the question of what should be. Institutions of higher education should be the leaders in developing human capital and in developing personnel for the school systems in the Appalachian Region. Colleges and Universities should be in the vanguard of change, innovation, and developing new and better programs. Probably most educators would agree.

We could also enumerate characteristics of the Appalachian Region with which few would disagree: emigration of unskilled workers, poverty, poor land use, undereducated adults, unemployment or underemployment, inept local government procedures, poor transportation, poor communication, topography, slowness of adoption of innovation, etc.

Persons in the areas of systems analysis, planning, and evaluation would have us believe that a closed system is easier to evaluate than an open system. One could argue that the Appalachian Region is more a closed than an open system. If ever higher education should be able to see failures, institutions in Appalachia can.

1. Up to 85 per cent of teachers in a typical Appalachian School District are from the immediate area where they presently work--they graduated from high school in the school district where they are or in a neighboring district or within the region.

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2. A majority of teachers have gone to local colleges both for undergraduate and, if they continue, graduate work. (Often they complete about three years of college before accepting gainful employment in a teaching field.)

3. Approximately 50 per cent of the teachers in the region respond that teaching is not a primary source of family income.

4. A high per cent (40 per cent or so) of teachers presently in school districts have not had any formal education training since 1958. (This was the Sputnik era. Knowledge has doubled twice between 1958 and 1969).

5. A high percentage of teachers lack a bachelor's degree, (almost one teacher in three) that level of training seen in the profession as a minimum for performing the important task of teaching.

6. As many as 30 per cent of the school teachers in the "typical" Appalachia School District will reach retirement age within the next seven years.

If ever colleges could study their service areas and their publics, the Appalachian Colleges can. There is a low immigration of skilled workers and teachers and there is a high emigration of unskilled personnel. The region has stayed basically the same. Colleges and universities could have studied carefully their service groups and adjusted to meet the needs of these groups; they still can.

Institutions of higher education should be taking bold new steps in teacher training and in leading the way to better education. Basically they have nothing to lose.

1. The high percentage of older teachers who are retiring will allow for drastic shuffling within the teaching profession.

2. The high percentage of dropouts among the Appalachian youths (from annual reports it seems that less than 4 out of 10 who start first grade complete high school in the Appalachian Region) attests to the failure of the education system and of colleges throughout the region.

3. The low economic base allows new ventures in teacher training and recruitment, especially with the lucrative fellowships offered through various federal programs. In some cases fellowships can offer a teacher remuneration equivalent to present teaching salary. Colleges and universities in the area should draw upon this kind of incentive for change to create new programs.

Changes will come slowly. Higher education should take the lead. Change cannot come without utilizing all the resources available, including state departments of education, federal governments, local education agencies, and institutions of higher education. The most logical procedure for change is the <u>involvement</u> of all agencies in a series of steps which might be defined as a change process:

1. Establishment of goals.
2. Definition of problems.
3. Delineation of procedures to seek answers to correcting the problems.
4. Establishment of priorities.
5. Development of programs.
6. Pilot or field testing of programs and procedures.
7. Implementation of new ideas.
8. Evaluation.
9. Dissemination.

Assuming that total involvement of the institutions of higher education state departments, local agencies and the federal government is not feasible at this time, or that institutions of higher education are unwilling to join to provide the leadership necessary, then professional planners might be brought in to utilize techniques of manipulation in change--procedures of: (1) bypass, (2) multi-event planning, (3) use of PERT techniques as a way of avoiding obstacles and the hindering effects of other agencies, and (4) other techniques of planned changes and manipulation. However, involvement seems to be the most useful and viable procedure for planned effective change procedures. Higher Education should take initiating steps in encouraging the involvement of all groups in educational change.

Higher education needs to look around to become aware of its environment. All around higher education society is using cooperative and collective techniques to get the job done, especially where a single unit is unable to accomplish the task by itself. Federal legislation is encouraging cooperation.

1. Title III of the Higher Education Act requests programs to assist developing institutions through cooperation and sharing with established institutions.

2. The Higher Educat ion Act is also propounding "Networks for Knowledge" Program, embodying cooperative action.

3. The Educations Professions Development Act (EPDA) encourages the cooperation between and among higher education, local education agencies, state departments of education, and other federal programs.

4. Title I, Higher Educationa Act implies cooperative action of College and community in solving community problems.

Studies have been done of rural shared services and the impact of these kind of services on change. The School Study Council movement is gaining momentum. This concept of sharing initiated with Paul Mort in the early 1940's and, although dormant for awhile, has been a cooperative compelling force in American education. New York State has made use of Boards of Cooperative Educational Services to provide change. In the Appalachian Region there is a history of cooperation through the regional economic and development districts.

What are institutions of higher education doing in the way of cooperation? What reciprocity exists between and among the Appalachian States for certification? How are institutions of higher education coping with the teacher shortage? Are they requesting local school districts to utilize teacher aides? What are institutions of higher education doing in the training of teacher aides? Or perhaps more pertinent, which of your students going into the local schools have an opportunity to work with teacher aides during their training programs? (Perhaps it is the job of a program of inservice in local districts to show teachers how to use aides.) What kinds of arrangements are being made to create change? Have any colleges instituted the idea of James B. Conant's "clinical professor," the man who works both in local schools and in the University to become aware of

local problems, and who attempts to translate local problems and program needs into the curricular offerings of the institutions of higher education?

A characteristic often stated about Appalachians is their individualism, their attitude of "show me." Appalachians seem to respect those persons whom they trust, and will work in a dedicated fashion to achieve the goals which they themselves and those whom they trust see and describe as important. If the college does not have available a cadre of such persons to work with the local districts, it might be possible to combine a person from the institution of higher education skilled in the technology and the process of change with a person respected by the local school persons (perhaps a regional representative of the State Department of Education). This sort of a team approach might allow the institutions of higher education to gain an entree into the local districts and to create some change where if they went alone, they would be rejected. Cooperative ventures might be one solution.

Also, if the Appalachian truly is a person who says "show me," what are the institutions of higher education doing to show local schools about the use of teacher aides? How many institutions employ paraprofessionals in their classrooms? How many use a paraprofessional to work with a professor in a meaningful team arrangement?

If none, does higher education propose to <u>demonstrate</u> the use of teacher aides?

All of this is by way of suggesting that now is the time for initiating shared and cooperative activity to bring about significant change in the schools. If we expect significant change--change which may be measured so simply as increased holding power or increased job placement--significant change must occur among those who are in the role of teacher. This also means teachers in institutions of higher education.

Before the teacher preparation institutions stands a very real challenge, past performance as measured by the obvious failure of education in Appalachia needs to be forgotten. Bold new steps must be taken. Cooperative action may offer one of the major avenues to better education.

Some Questions and Conjectures

There is a need for persons who can generate ideas. There is a need for persons who can involve others in recognizing the need for change and the practical importance of new ideas. There is also a need for persons to implement new ideas. Perhaps even at the institution of higher education level there needs to be a recognized role differentiation.

Some things which hinder institutions of higher education from becoming active participants in the local schools may be: (1) the

reward system, (2) the day to day scheduling of professors so they cannot get out to the schools, and (3) the lack of contact between professors and elementary and secondary classrooms.

The line between the institution of higher education and the local school district must become less and less distinct. More than ever, colleges and universities must have locations for laboratory and experimental work. More than ever local school districts need to become involved with teacher preparation institutions if only for the infusion of new ideas into their reasonably closed systems.

Teachers must become employed on a year around basis. If we believe in significant change among youth who are already behind in their development when measured against national norms, where can we find a better-trained pool of talent to work with them than the teachers? Why should the schools be closed three months of the year? Why should teachers be unemployed in the summer when youth of the area are trying desperately to catch up?

What institution of higher education has developed a functional working relationship with another institution of higher education so that there can be an interchange of personnel? Perhaps an Appalachian teacher preparation institution should exchange pupils with a school in the northeast or in a large city so that the teachers can become exposed to new ideas and problems of the schools.

What college sends a team of educators to a local district to provide in-depth training for a total staff during the summer?

What college trains student teachers and teacher aides together, perhaps sending both together to share a "student teaching" experience?

What college makes demonstration use of the concepts it proposes for local districts: differentiated staffing, team teaching, flexible scheduling, etc.?

How can higher education and state departments of education cooperate in experimentation and the developing of new ideas?

The list of questions could go on. Add to it!!

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